

## 4.12. MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES

### Management Measure for Maintenance of Sewage Facilities:

***Ensure that sewage pumpout facilities are maintained in operational condition and encourage their use.***

#### ***Management Measure Description***

Boaters are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment and of their role in maintaining healthy waters. Boaters today want to do what is proper for the environment, and maintaining sewage facilities in good operating condition at all times so that they are always accessible to boaters helps boaters achieve their environmental goals. This measure is important because it is the simplest and most effective way to prevent the failure of sewage facilities, and to ensure their availability to boaters.

Sewage collection facilities, including sewage pumpout stations and portable toilet dump stations, help reduce the release of untreated sewage into marina and surface waters. Boaters can only use the facilities, however, when they operate properly. Nonfunctioning sewage collection and disposal facilities present a serious obstacle to boaters whose holding tanks are full, and in such circumstances boaters are left with few choices for sewage disposal—travel elsewhere to find an operable pumpout or dump station, discharge sewage directly overboard, or cease using their boat toilets. The first of these options is very inconvenient; the second is illegal in no discharge zones, and legal otherwise only through an approved marine sanitation device in appropriate waters; and the third would mean “stop using your boat” to many boaters. Also, an inoperable pumpout or dump station at one marina can create an excessive demand at stations in the same area that are operable. Long lines at the

pumpouts can result, and these can be discouraging and tempt people to discharge illegally. Finally, if pumpouts are free to those with slips at a marina and the pumpout at that marina is inoperable, patrons will not likely be pleased with having to pay for a pumpout elsewhere.

#### ***Best Management Practices***

##### **Pollution Prevention Practices**

- *Maintain a dedicated fund and issue a contract for pumpout and dump station repair and maintenance (applies to government-operated marinas, pumpout stations, and dump stations only).*

Government-owned and operated marinas and launch ramps can establish dedicated funds specifically to maintain pumpouts and dump stations in continuous operational condition. If a Clean Vessel Act grant was used to purchase and install the sewage station, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires that pumpout equipment be maintained in operational condition for boater use.

- *Regularly inspect and maintain sewage facilities.*

Sewage disposal facilities can be kept operating properly with regular inspection and maintenance. Routine maintenance, performed according to instructions that come with the unit, can be done by marina staff, with major problems referred to

qualified service personnel. Routine inspections of marina waste holding tanks and secondary containment areas will ensure their integrity. If septic tanks and leach fields are used for final disposal, the tanks will function most efficiently and at least cost if they are pumped out regularly to prevent overflows and clogging.

Boatyards and marina facilities capable of servicing and repairing boat toilet and holding tank systems can promote annual marine sanitation device inspections and maintenance by offering this service to boat owners. During the off season or winter storage months, this service can generate additional income for a marina, and is one way that marinas can play proactive roles in boater education and the promotion of environmental awareness.

- *Disinfect the suction connection of a pumpout station (stationary or portable) by dipping or spraying it with disinfectant.*

While not a practice to protect water quality, part of pumpout station maintenance is protecting pumpout operators, whether marina staff or boaters, against infection and illness. Risk of contact with bacteria or viruses while handling the pumpout nozzle can be minimized by providing a pail that contains water and a nontoxic disinfectant, such as common bleach, next to the pumpout station for dipping the nozzle end into immediately following each use. Care should be taken to ensure that the disinfectant solution does not spill into marina waters. The mildest, least harmful disinfectant that will do the job is the best choice for this purpose. Use of the disinfectant solution can be added to instructions provided on how to use the pumpout.

- *Maintain convenient, clean, dry, and pleasant restroom facilities in the marina.*

An effective way to encourage boaters to dispose of their sewage properly and not to discharge it overboard is to have good shoreside restroom facilities available for customers and guests. Surveys have shown that a factor important to

boaters when selecting a marina is the cleanliness, condition, and convenience of its restrooms. These surveys show that boaters prefer to use restrooms that are:

- Clean and dry
- Close to docks and accessible at all hours
- Well maintained and brightly lit
- Free of insects
- Amply supplied with toilet paper and hand towels
- Equipped with private showers and dressing rooms
- Safe

BMP Summary Table 12 summarizes the BMPs for Sewage Facility Maintenance mentioned in this guidance.

**BMP Summary Table 12. MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES**

**MANAGEMENT MEASURE - Ensure that sewage pumpout facilities are maintained in operational condition and encourage their use.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:**

When faced with nonfunctioning sewage collection and disposal facilities, boaters whose holding tanks are full have three choices: 1) go elsewhere to find an operable pumpout or dump station which is inconvenient; 2) discharge sewage directly overboard which is illegal in no discharge zones and otherwise only through an approved marine sanitation device in nearshore waters; or 3) cease using their boat toilets, which to some would mean "stop using your boat"; also, one inoperable pumpout might overload another one nearby, and tempt boaters to discharge illegally, particularly if the other one is not free or charges a higher fee.

Best Management Practice Examples & Type	Marina Location & Usage	Benefits to Marina	Projected Environmental Benefits	Initial Cost Estimate	Annual Operation & Maintenance Cost Estimate	Notes
<b>POLLUTION PREVENTION PRACTICES</b>						
Maintain a dedicated fund and issue a contract for pumpout and dump station repair and maintenance (applies to government facilities only)	Government run public facilities – generally recommended	HIGH; facilities funded by a CVA grant are required to be properly maintained; an annual service contract ensures regular maintenance and proper functioning	HIGH; reduces sewage discharge that can result when a pumpout is out of service	LOW	MODERATE	Applies only to government operated marinas and pumpout stations.
Regularly inspect and maintain sewage facilities	Marina sewage collection facilities - universally recommended	HIGH; regular inspections help detect small maintenance needs before they become big problems and cost more to repair	MODERATE; properly operating pumpouts help reduce sewage pollution	LOW	LOW to MODERATE	Requires staff training and a regular inspection schedule; keep records of each inspection.
Disinfect the suction connection of a pumpout station (stationary or portable) by dipping or spraying it with disinfectant	Marina pumpout station - universally recommended	HIGH; protects pumpout operators from infection	LOW; be careful to avoid spilling disinfectant into waterbody	LOW	LOW	A simple method is to provide a pail that contains water and a disinfectant like bleach next to the pumpout station

BMP Summary Table 12. (cont.) MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES						
Best Management Practice Examples & Type	Marina Location & Usage	Benefits to Marina	Projected Environmental Benefits	Initial Cost Estimate	Annual Operation & Maintenance Cost Estimate	Notes
Maintain convenient, clean, dry, and pleasant restroom facilities in the marina	Marina - universally recommended	HIGH; clean bathrooms attract customers; marina surveys show that a good restroom is a major reason why boaters select a marina	HIGH; good restrooms get used and reduce boat toilet use, and hence overboard discharge	HIGH to MODERATE	LOW to MODERATE	Customers are happiest with clean, dry, convenient restrooms; bright lights and pleasant odor are also important to customers.